

# COVID-19 TOOLKIT

RETURNING TO WORK



**FACTS.**   
OVER FEAR  
COVID-19

**OCCMED**  
SANFORD  
HEALTH

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A detailed 3D rendering of a cell with a virus particle. The cell is shown in cross-section, revealing its internal structure. The surface of the cell is covered with numerous red, spiky protrusions, which are the surface proteins of the virus. Small yellow dots are scattered across the cell's surface, representing other cellular components or receptors. The background is a dark, reddish-brown color, suggesting a microscopic environment. A blue diagonal shape is present in the top-left corner of the image.

# ABOUT COVID-19

# COVID-19 FAQs

## WHAT IS COVID-19?

- COVID-19 is a respiratory illness caused by a new strain of coronavirus.

## THE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19 INCLUDE:

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- New loss of taste or smell
- Some people may have COVID-19 but show no symptoms.
- For a current list of symptoms, please visit the CDC website.

## HOW DOES COVID-19 SPREAD, AND WHAT CAN I DO TO PREVENT IT?

- The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads person-to-person through respiratory droplets produced from a cough or sneeze. It can also spread through a contaminated surface, but this is not the main way it spreads.
- You can help prevent the spread of COVID-19 by:
  - Avoiding contact with sick people
  - Covering your cough or sneeze
  - Frequently washing your hands
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
  - Staying home when you are sick
  - Cleaning and disinfecting high-touch surfaces with a regular household cleaning spray

## WHO IS AFFECTED BY COVID-19?

- People of all ages can contract COVID-19. Young and healthy individuals may have no symptoms or simply feel like they have a cold.
- Groups most seriously impacted include:
  - Individuals ages 60 and older
  - Individuals with chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, kidney disease
  - Individuals with compromised immune systems
- These groups account for the majority of virus-related deaths.

## HOW IS COVID-19 DIAGNOSED?

- Nasal Swab PCR testing
  - Checks for the presence of COVID-19 DNA in the respiratory tract
  - Indicates if the person currently has the disease or within the last 10 days
  - It is possible that a person can have a negative result today yet in a few days develop the COVID-19 infection and have a positive test if they are in contact with an infected person and incubating the disease
- Antigen Testing
  - Checks for the presence of COVID-19 proteins in the respiratory tract
  - Indicates if the person currently has the disease or within the last 10 days
  - It is possible that a person can have a negative result today yet in a few days develop the COVID-19 infection and have a positive test if they are in contact with an infected person and incubating the disease
  - This is a quick test and has a higher chance of missing a COVID-19 infection when it is present

# COVID-19 IN THE WORKPLACE

## WHAT IMPACT WILL COVID-19 HAVE ON COMPANIES?

- Due to COVID-19, companies may experience increased worker absenteeism due to illness, the need to care for sick family members and school closures.
- The virus has caused some changes in commerce patterns, such as shoppers migrating toward unusual hours to avoid contact with the virus.

## WHAT ACTIONS CAN WE TAKE TO PROTECT OUR WORKFORCE?

### These precautions can be taken:

- Encourage and enforce the need for sick employees to stay home

### Consider loosening your policy regarding needs for sick notes because:

- Sick note requests can overwhelm clinics
- Clinic visits can disrupt social distancing efforts

## WHAT DO I DO IF A SICK EMPLOYEE SHOWS UP TO WORK?

### Follow these steps:

- Send them home immediately
- Advise them to call their primary care provider for further instructions
- Advise coworkers against significant contact (standing within six feet of the sick individual)

## WHAT STEPS SHOULD WE TAKE IF AN EMPLOYEE HAS COVID-19?

- Keep it confidential. This is required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Inform close contacts of the sick employee that they may have been close to someone with COVID-19. Direct these employees to the Department of Health webpage.

## WHEN CAN A SICK WORKER RETURN TO WORK?

### An ill worker without a COVID-19 diagnosis may consider returning to work after:

- 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications such as Tylenol **AND**
- Symptoms are improving (like cough and shortness of breath) **AND**
- At least 5 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

### For workers exposed to others with COVID-19:

- **Are up to date with all recommended vaccines (all primary doses and booster)** may remain at work; wear masks for 10 days.
- **Are NOT up to date with all recommended vaccines (all primary doses and booster)** are taken off work for 5 days and mask for a full 10 days.

# WHAT IMPACT HAS COVID-19 HAD ON FEDERAL REGULATIONS?

## [Protecting Workers: Guidance on Mitigating and Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 in the Workplace](#)

**Purpose:** This guidance is designed to help employers protect workers who are unvaccinated (including people who are not fully vaccinated) or otherwise at-risk, including if they are immunocompromised, and also implement new guidance involving workers who are fully vaccinated but located in areas of substantial or high community transmission.

**At Risk Workers:** Some conditions, such as a prior transplant, as well as prolonged use of corticosteroids or other immune-weakening medications, may affect workers' ability to have a full immune response to vaccination. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), workers with disabilities may be legally entitled to reasonable accommodations that protect them from the risk of contracting COVID-19 if, for example, they cannot be protected through vaccination, cannot be vaccinated, or cannot use face coverings. Employers should consider taking steps to protect these at-risk workers as they would unvaccinated workers, regardless of their vaccination status.

### **The Role of Employers:**

1. Facilitate employees getting vaccinated:
  - a. Grant paid time off to receive vaccine and recover from side-effects of the vaccine
  - b. Provide workplace vaccinations for the unvaccinated
  - c. Consider mandating workers get vaccinated or undergo regular COVID-19 testing
2. Instruct employees to stay home from work if:
  - a. all workers who are infected
  - b. unvaccinated workers who have had close contact with someone who tested positive for SARS-CoV-2
  - c. all workers with COVID-19 symptoms
3. Continue physical distancing in all communal areas for unvaccinated and otherwise at-risk workers
4. Provide unvaccinated workers with face coverings or surgical masks. In high transmission areas fully vaccinated people are recommended to wear face coverings in public indoor areas.
5. Maintain ventilation systems per CDC's Ventilation in Buildings document
6. Perform routine cleaning and disinfection
7. Report and record COVID-19 related infections and deaths
8. Implement protections from retaliation and set up an anonymous process for workers to voice concerns about COVID-19-related hazards

- **Drug Testing** If an employee refuses to complete a drug test, it is the employer's responsibility to evaluate the circumstances and determine if the worker's actions should be considered a refusal. The Department of Transportation (DOT) recommends employers be sensitive to workers who may not feel comfortable visiting a clinic or collection site because of COVID-19 concerns.
- **Service Agents** The DOT recognizes that service agents such as collectors, maintenance, repair and operating supplies personnel (MROs), breath alcohol technicians and substance abuse professionals (SAPs) may not be able to find the necessary resources to meet their re-qualification requirements. In this event, the DOT is considering these service agents qualified per Part 40 to continue providing services while this policy is in effect. [DOT COVID-19 Drug & Alcohol Testing Statement of Enforcement Discretion for Substance Abuse Professionals and Service Agents](#)

### Recordkeeping

OSHA has published new guidance beginning on May 26, 2020, requiring all employers to record COVID-19 cases that are:

- Confirmed by at least one positive test
- Work-related
- Causing employees to seek medical treatment beyond first aid, resulting in lost workdays, restricted duty or loss of consciousness or death

These new requirements replace earlier guidance that did require recordkeeping of cases for general industry.

[OSHA Issues Guidance Clarifying Recording Obligations for COVID-19 Cases](#)

### Spirometry

Spirometry for employment exams has been suspended until further notice. Spirometry not performed on an employment examination will be waived until next year's examination.

**Regulations are updated on an ongoing basis as more is learned about COVID-19.**



# REOPENING GUIDANCE

# GUIDANCE FOR BUSINESS REOPENING DURING COVID-19

## EMPLOYEE EDUCATION

- Provide education on COVID-19 and its symptoms
- Encourage self-monitoring
- Ask employees who feel ill to stay home
- Create steps to report illness at work and return home quickly
- Encourage hygiene practices, such as frequent hand washing and covering coughs and sneezes
- Replace handshakes with contactless greetings
- Discourage sharing workspace, tools and other items
- Follow social distancing guidelines

## COMPANY POLICIES

- Provide flexible sick leave policies, such as not requiring a doctor's note and providing permission to stay home with sick family members
- Encourage working from home when possible
- Replace face-to-face meetings with video conferencing
- Stop nonessential travel
- Stagger shifts to reduce on-site employees at any given time
- Clearly communicate response plans and expectations

## WORKPLACE PREPARATION

- Provide soap and water or 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer, along with tissue and trash receptacles
- Distance workspaces or add physical barriers, such as plexiglass, between desks
- Close gathering and eating areas
- Create a designated traffic flow, including an entry and exit
- Avoid handling credit or ID cards for transactions and create privacy for verbalization of card numbers

## CLEANING PRACTICES

- If an employee in the workplace is ill, close off their work area, open windows and doors to increase air circulation and wait 24 hours before cleaning when possible
- Wear disposable gloves and gowns while cleaning and wash hands immediately after removing protective equipment
- Disinfect common spaces routinely, including offices, bathrooms, common areas and shared electronic equipment
- Disinfect high-touch surfaces, including tables, door knobs, light switches, handles, desks, phones and keyboards
- Clean hard surfaces with soap and water and disinfect using a household bleach solution (five tablespoons of bleach per gallon of water), a 70% alcohol-based solution or a regular household cleaner
- Remove objects with soft surfaces from the workplace to avoid difficult cleaning areas

# EMPLOYEE SCREENING GUIDE

## SCREENING BEST PRACTICES

- Identify which entrances in your building(s) will be staffed by a screener.
- Place signage to specify which entrances will and will not be staffed by a screener.
- The screening station should be placed in an area that creates a flow among employees entering the building, while maintaining social distancing guidelines.
- Leaders should work together to provide staggered start times for employees and provide education on the importance of these screening checks in our COVID-19 prevention efforts.
- Screenings should be conducted all day. An employee should be screened each time they enter the building by following the process detailed below.

## REQUIRED MATERIALS

- Thermometers
- Alcohol wipes (to clean thermometers between each screening)
- Masks for all the screeners

### Also needed:

- Instructions for employees who do not pass a screening
- A tracking log for documenting employees with temperatures of 100.4 degrees or higher
- Floor tape or a similar item to create a visual cue for maintaining social distancing

## PROCESS FLOW

1. Employees enter the designated screening area and check-in at the screening station.
2. A screener completes a temperature check.
3. If an employee does not pass the check (with a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher), they should be sent home. Employees who are sent home should notify their supervisor by phone, email or text to advise them they will not be working.
4. The screener cleans the thermometer as recommended by the manufacturer (described below).
5. The screener documents any employee who does not pass the temperature check on the screening log.

## WHEN CAN A SICK EMPLOYEE RETURN TO WORK?

**A sick employee without a COVID-19 diagnosis may consider returning to work after:**

- One fever-free day (24 hours) without the use of fever-reducing medications such as Tylenol **AND**
- At least 5 days have passed since symptoms first appeared **AND**
- Symptoms have improved

**For employees with known exposures to COVID-19:**

- Those who have received all recommended doses of the vaccine (primary doses plus a booster) may remain at work but must wear a mask for 10 days.
- Those who have not received all recommended doses of the vaccine must take off work for 5 days. Upon return, they're required to wear a mask for 10 days.

## CAN WE TEST EMPLOYEES FOR COVID-19 ANTIBODIES?

- Testing was approved through emergency process
- There is only a 40% chance that a positive antibody test means immunity
- Antibodies should not be used to decide on individual immunity. Additional research is needed.
- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) does not allow the requirement for antibody/serology testing before allowing employees to enter the workplace. Nasal swab testing for COVID-19 is allowable under ADA.



**WORKPLACE  
BEST PRACTICES**

# ATTENTION

## **Please Follow Social Distancing Guidelines**

Maintain 6 feet from others  
when possible. Thank you for  
helping us keep healthy.

# COVID-19 Protect Yourself & Clean Hands Often



Use clean running water



Apply soap



Lather soap for at least 20 seconds



Scrub backs of hands & between fingers



Rinse



Dry with a clean towel or air dry



Use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.

## Slow the spread & protect others

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Throw used tissues in the trash
- Clean and disinfect frequently
- Avoid close contact with others
- If you are sick, stay home

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

# HOW TO PROPERLY WEAR A FACE MASK



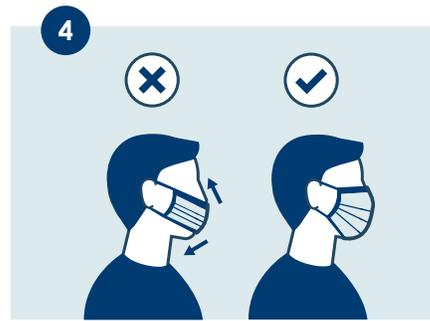
ENSURE THE PROPER  
SIDE OF THE MASK  
FACES OUTWARDS



SECURE THE STRINGS  
BEHIND YOUR HEAD  
OR OVER YOUR EARS



PRESS THE METALLIC  
STRIP TO FIT THE SHAPE  
OF THE NOSE



COVER MOUTH  
AND NOSE FULLY MAKING  
SURE THERE ARE NO GAPS



DO NOT TOUCH THE  
MASK WHILE USING IT,  
IF YOU DO  
WASH YOUR HANDS

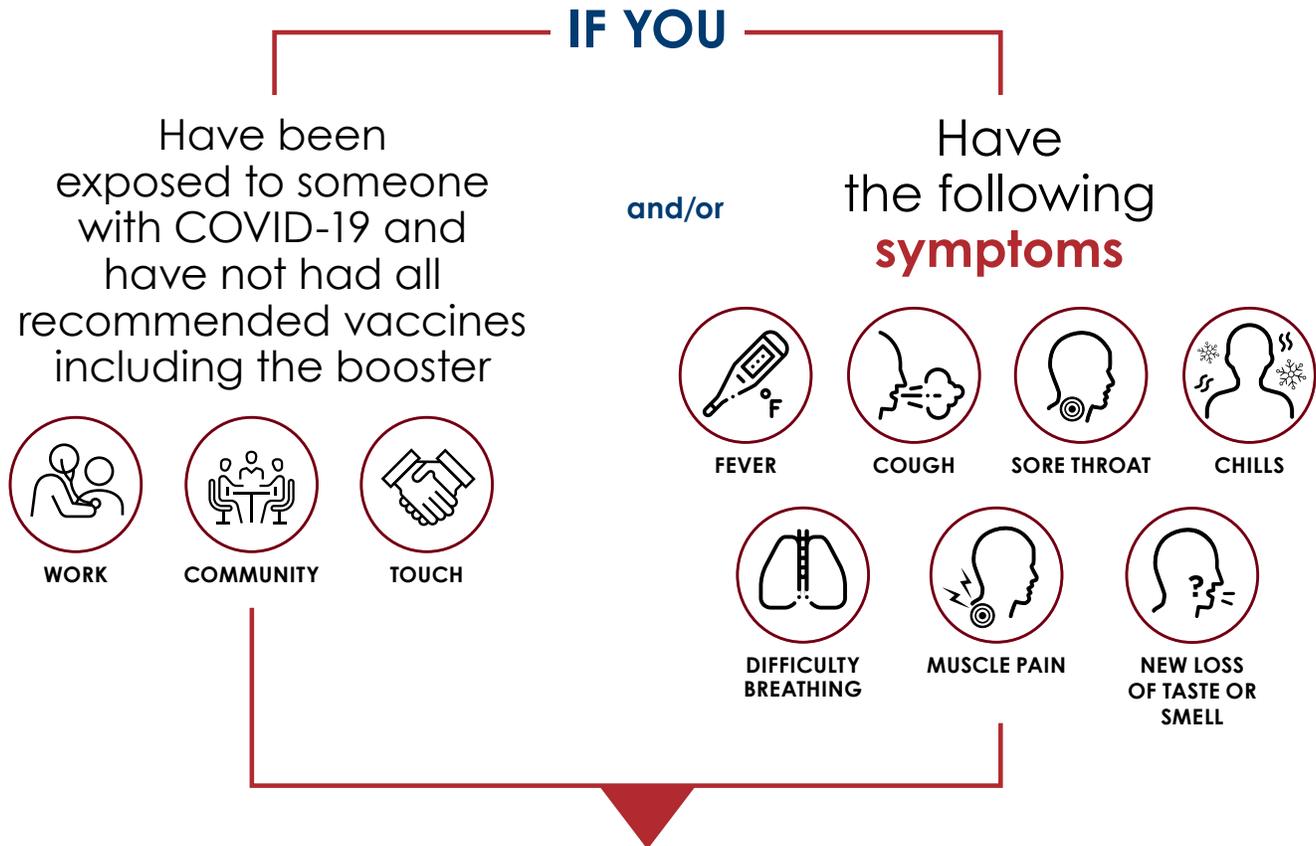


REMOVE THE MASK  
FROM BEHIND BY  
HOLDING THE STRINGS  
WITH CLEAN HANDS



**PRINTABLE  
MATERIALS**

# EXPERIENCING COVID-19 SYMPTOMS?



**Please call your local Sanford Health clinic at  
to speak with a health care provider.**

Please notify work of your status by calling





**COVID-19**  
**RESOURCES**

# COVID-19 RESOURCES

## REGULATORY

[CDC](#)

[DOL](#)

[DOI](#)

[FMCSA](#)

[OSHA](#)

## STATE

[Iowa](#)

[Minnesota](#)

[North Dakota](#)

[South Dakota](#)

## CONTACT US

OccMed Phone Number (888) 600-2378

[occmed@sanfordhealth.org](mailto:occmed@sanfordhealth.org)

## VIRTUAL CARE RESOURCES

Contact our toll-free number to learn more about telehealth options including enrollment information for the OccMed COVID-19 Line.

## ONLINE

[Sanford Health Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Information](#)

[Occupational Medicine](#)